

ISRAEL'S INDEPENDENCE DAY 2012

HON. CAROLYN B. MALONEY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, April 27, 2012

Mrs. MALONEY. Mr. Speaker, Israel is celebrating the 64th Anniversary of its declaration of Independence, issued one day before the expiration of the British Mandate. For 64 years, Israel has grown from an agricultural nation of pioneers to an ultra-modern high tech powerhouse.

Israel has repeatedly absorbed hundreds of thousands of immigrants, found employment for them and used their skills and ingenuity to build a remarkable country. Since its founding, Israel's population has grown tenfold, thanks in part to the arrival of Jewish populations fleeing discrimination in Europe, Arab countries, Africa and the Soviet Union. As a nation of immigrants, Israel draws its strength from the diversity of its people, much as the United States does.

Against all odds, Israel has grown into an economic powerhouse. It was welcomed in 2010 as a member of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), marking it as one of the world's most highly developed economies. Israel has shown that a small country with few natural resources can succeed by investing in its people and supporting its emerging companies. Israel has more high tech start-ups than any other country in the world other than the United States, and it attracts more venture capital per capita than any other nation.

Israel has succeeded by transforming its challenges into assets. Adversity has made it innovative. Lacking potable water, it is at the forefront of desalination efforts. Lacking arable land, it developed innovative ways to grow produce in a desert. Lacking energy, it has pioneered advances in solar and wind energy. Lacking security, it has built one of the world's best militaries and produces some of the most effective security products. Lacking space, Israel has invested in developing information technology which requires intellectual capital but little land. Some say that Israel's culture is ideal for innovation, with its lack of hierarchy, comfort with risk-taking and drive for individualism.

Despite Israel's great advances, Israel continues to face a hostile neighborhood and is surrounded by hostile nations that deny its right to exist. In my view, the bond between the United States and Israel is unbreakable. As the only true democracy in the Middle East, Israel faces the challenges of a pluralistic society. Israel shares our devotion to a free press, freedom of association and adherence to the rule of law.

Although Israel's economy is currently thriving, it has spent its entire existence in a state of war. In light of the challenges that confront it, Israel has the absolute right and sole discretion to take whatever steps may be necessary to defend itself and its citizens.

Today on Yom Ha'atzmaut we rejoice in Israel's successes and renew our commitment to support the right of Israel's citizens to live in safety and security.

TRIBUTE TO LIEUTENANT
COLONEL THOMAS H. MAYFIELD

HON. JON RUNYAN

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, April 27, 2012

Mr. RUNYAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise this evening to pay tribute to one of my constituents, Lieutenant Colonel Thomas H. Mayfield of Willingboro, New Jersey for his courageous and dedicated service to our Nation. Lieutenant Colonel Mayfield entered the U.S. Army Air Corps in 1941 and was one of the first members of the 332d Fighter Group, more commonly known as the Tuskegee Airmen, an African-American aviation unit which provided critical support for the Allied campaign during World War II.

Tuskegee Airmen like Lieutenant Colonel Mayfield were called upon to serve their country at a time when the armed forces were segregated, yet they persevered in the face of discrimination and proved themselves to be valiant and indispensable warriors. Their example paved the way for future generations of African Americans to serve honorably in the military.

For his outstanding service to the United States as one of the original Tuskegee Airmen, Lieutenant Colonel Mayfield was awarded the Congressional Gold Medal—the highest civilian honor Congress can bestow. This historic unit's unparalleled record also led to a Presidential Unit Citation.

Lieutenant Colonel Thomas H. Mayfield retired from the United States Air Force in 1970 with over 29 years of distinguished service. Throughout his military career he received numerous accolades, decorations and awards for outstanding service, most notably, the Silver Pilot Wings and promotion to Second Lieutenant in the U.S. Army Air Corps after completing flight training school in Tuskegee, Alabama.

I thank Lieutenant Colonel Mayfield for his patriotism, and his continued service to his community and his country. I urge my colleagues to join me in recognition of this trail-blazing American aviator.

CELEBRATING THE LIFE OF
REGINALD E. GILLIAM, JR.

HON. CHRIS VAN HOLLEN

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, April 27, 2012

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. Speaker, it is with a heavy heart that I rise today to recognize and celebrate the life of Reginald E. Gilliam, Jr. After a brave battle against lymphoma, Reg—as he was known—passed away on March 28, 2012 at the age of sixty-seven. Reg had an extraordinary career, honorably serving his country, mentoring students, and paving an inclusive path in politics and in life for all Americans.

Reg served our country proudly and with distinction. As Legislative Counsel to Senator John Glenn, Reg developed legislation on education, economic development and urban safety and fire prevention, all of which were enacted into law. Reg also served in the sub-cabinet of New York Governor Mario Cuomo

as his chief official in charge of surface transportation, and then as Chief of Staff to Congressman Louis Stokes. The breadth of his knowledge and the depth of his dedication to the people he served were always apparent, and his efforts led to his enriching the lives of countless people.

As Vice Chairman and Commissioner of the U.S. Interstate Commerce Commission (ICC) under President Jimmy Carter, Reg promoted the inclusion of minorities throughout the transportation industry. No one was more proud of his appointment to this important position than his father, one of the original members of A. Philip Randolph's Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters and an employee of the railroad industry, which was closely regulated by the ICC. Reg was sworn into office by his father in an emotional and moving ceremony.

Reg's influence was not limited to the public sector. As Senior Managing Director at Hill & Knowlton Worldwide Public Affairs, he represented large and small companies alike on legislative and regulatory policy. For the past ten years, he was Senior Vice President of Government Affairs at Sodexo, Inc., playing a vital role in shaping the company into the significant enterprise that it is today.

Perhaps most notable was Reg's commitment to education. He was one of the founders of the Harvard Black Student Association, became its first Chairman and would eventually serve on the Board of Trustees for several colleges and universities. He also taught at the State University of New York and at Williams College.

In addition to pursuing his own education, Reg always made sure to give back. During his time at Harvard, Reg served as a Voting Rights Act poll watcher in the South, volunteered on neighborhood safety patrols in Harlem, and wrote his final legal thesis on the Newark riots.

Reg was dedicated to utilizing his own success to help others and spent countless hours mentoring and counseling young people. His service was recognized on numerous occasions, including his receipt of the Lifetime Achievement Award from the Harvard Black Law Association and the President's Award for Leadership & Excellence from the Washington Government Relations Group.

Reg was a significant presence in our community. It takes an extraordinary person to approach every situation with the grace and compassion that Reg did. His good work made a difference in the lives of many, and he will always be remembered for his kindness, dedication and tireless efforts to help others.

On a personal note, I had the privilege of working with Reg on a number of issues important to workers and businesses in our community. He always conducted himself with the highest degree of integrity and professionalism. He was careful to present all sides of an issue and explain what he was seeking to accomplish. In addition, Reg regularly took the time to ask how others were doing even as he was struggling with his own personal health challenges. I will miss his warm personality, good humor and sense of humanity.

I send my deepest condolences to his wife Arleen and to his many friends, and I ask my colleagues to join me in remembering this remarkable man.